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Press Release

PRESS RELEASE

Dakar, Senegal — [Greenpeace](#) welcomes the decision of the [Senegalese](#) government to cancel licenses of pelagic [fishing vessels](#) issued to 29 foreign trawlers from Russia, Comoros, Lithuania, Saint Vincent Grenadine and Belize.

“These kinds of licenses are a direct threat to employment and food security for millions of Senegalese who have been dependent on fishing for centuries,” says Raoul Monsembula, Oceans Campaigner, Greenpeace.

[West Africa](#)’s fish stocks are severely pressured by over-exploitation, mainly by destructive high-tech Russian, Asian and European vessels that can in a single day capture, process, and freeze 200-250 tons of fish.

“This corresponds to the fish consumption by at least 9,000 Senegalese during a full year” (1) FAO 2007.

Greenpeace has, for the last 18 months, called for the cancellation of the licenses and less than a month ago, the Greenpeace ship [Arctic Sunrise](#) was patrolling the waters of Senegal and [Mauritania](#) to put the spotlight on the systematic plunder of West African waters by foreign vessels. “Most of the trawlers encountered by the Arctic Sunrise were European vessels or in some way linked to [Europe](#), including Russia(2).

On 27 April, [EU](#) Fisheries ministers got together in Luxemburg to discuss the reform of EU fishing rules, known as the common fisheries policy (CFP), but failed to take necessary steps to tackle the excessive fleet capacity of the European fishing fleet. “The same week as the fisheries ministers failed to make progress on fisheries reform, the EU had to cancel the permits for its vessels in Mauritanian waters months before time simply because these giants had used up their quota in no time, says Pavel Klinckhamers, Oceans Campaigner of Greenpeace. “If European ministers really want to tackle the issue of a bloated fleet, they have to act now and choose sustainable, low impact fisheries,” he argues.

Greenpeace urges the government of Senegal to declare an emergency moratorium on the allocation of fishing licenses, as a sustainable policy has not yet been defined. Greenpeace also calls on European governments and fisheries ministers to support a new [Common Fisheries Policy](#) that tackles Europe’s bloated fleet by scrapping the most destructive and oversized vessels, including factory trawlers operating in the waters of developing countries (3).

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1. Source FAO, 2007.

2. From 15 February to 15 April 2012 Greenpeace completed an expedition in Senegal and Mauritania

to highlight overfishing. A total of 71 vessels were observed and three out of four were found to have parent companies in either EU or other non-EU [European countries](#). More than a third bore the flag of an EU country and another third were sailing under flags of convenience. In Senegal, as much as 90% of the vessels were in some way linked to Europe, mostly Eastern Europe, (including Russia) and in Mauritania, this was the case for 80%.

3. The European Common Fisheries Policy, CFP, is supposed to ensure sound and sustainable fisheries. The reality is that it has failed. The same extensive and destructive fishing fleet which has pushed Europe's fish stocks to the brink now allows European fleets to Hoover up fish from seas outside of Europe, including in West Africa. A full review of the CFP, which takes place every ten years, is currently under way and provides a unique chance to end overfishing by EU vessels, in and outside of Europe, and begin the transition to sustainable low-impact practices.

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